

OPENING STATEMENT

BY

THE HONORABLE NORMAN Y. MINETA  
SECRETARY-DESIGNATE  
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

CONFIRMATION HEARING  
BEFORE  
THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION  
THE UNITED STATES SENATE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2000  
9:30 a.m.

**Mr. Chairman, it is a great honor and personal privilege for me to appear before you and the members of the Senate Commerce Committee this morning.**

**I would like to thank you especially, Mr. Chairman, for the courtesies you have extended to me since President Clinton announced my nomination three short weeks ago. Since then, I have had the opportunity to reach out to you and each member of the Committee - including the distinguished Ranking Member, with whom I've worked long and hard over many years.**

**I'm also delighted to thank my fellow Californians for their comments just now. Both Senators Boxer and Feinstein have been great friends for many, many years and extraordinary representatives of the Golden State. I am proud to be in their company.**

**I must also say what a personal honor it is for me to be joined at this table by your Committee colleague and my friend of close to 40 years, Dan Inouye. The Senior Senator from Hawaii is a man I admire in numerous individual dimensions of humanity and public service.**

**When the Senator received his Medal of Honor from President Clinton four weeks ago today, it was a proud moment for every American - but perhaps especially for those of us who have known and respected Dan for so very long.**

**Mr. Chairman, as you know, I've looked forward to the fullest possible conversation today. With that in mind, I'll keep my opening statement brief to help devote this hearing to your questions.**

**When the President nominated me to be the next Secretary of Commerce, I said that six months is a virtual eternity in the New Economy. And it is. am honored by and grateful for his confidence in me, and look forward to helping continue this longest period of sustained economic expansion in American history.**

**As you know, my parents came to the United States from Japan more than 90 years ago in search of the American Dream. My father began as a farmer in Washington State, worked his way down to California, and eventually founded a small insurance agency in San Jose.**

**The business remained small. But my father and mother's Dream remained large -- in many ways focused on their children and our full acceptance into American society and economic opportunity.**

**Mr. Chairman, the American economy our parents knew and worked in to raise us has been rebooted many times - and I would like to commend especially the work done by Secretary Bill Daley to reboot the Commerce Department, which I know to have been a prime interest of this Committee.**

**Because of Bill Daley's commitment and partnership with you, the Commerce Department is today more efficient, effective and transparent in its operations. If confirmed by you and the full Senate, I will continue to make this work in progress a top priority.**

**This commitment, which I make to you and to every constituent of the Department, should come as no surprise.**

**During my 21 years in the House of Representatives, I had the privilege to serve the American people alongside many of you. So, please forgive my repeating a personal mantra you've probably heard before.**

**I believe accountability and accessibility are among the greatest responsibilities every public official owes to the letter and spirit of the Constitution of the United States. The American people have the right to expect us to observe these principles as matters of basic good government, and to use them in our partnership with the private sector.**

**I believe that new markets, free and fair trade, research enabling the creation of advanced American products and services, e-commerce, a policy of digital inclusion to bridge the digital divide, and the best scientific data are neither partisan domains nor the**

**province of one-size-fits-all prescriptives from  
Washington, DC or anywhere else.**

**The advocacy of these principles, practices and services to the American people will be foremost among my efforts as Commerce Secretary.**

**Six months of opportunity and responsibility will demand a greater focus to make a greater difference. In that time, I plan to focus my energies and the energies of the Commerce Department in four areas:**

**! First, *keeping People in Business*. This means keeping the economy growing, Americans more prosperous, and developing new international markets for American business. We must always remember that people *are* our business. We must continue to invest in our workers, their opportunities, and their communities.**



**! Second, *Investing in our Nation's Future.***

**For the past 30 years, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has been the Nation's leader in predicting and protecting the environment. Americans today enjoy the best weather service in the world. Our ports are more efficient and environmentally safe. And rebuilding our fisheries is a top priority. In all matters, I will continue to focus our best science on managing our coastal and marine resources.**

**Investing in our nation's future also means making sure we have the technology and policies to fuel the new economy. Across Commerce, people are doing crucial work on R&D, technology diffusion and infrastructure modernization. I intend to see that this work stays in high gear and on track.**

**! Third, *Continuing to Mainstream the New Economy*. Our policies and programs must reach out to help every individual and every business transform ahead of our global competitors.**

**! And Fourth, *Accessible and Accountable Government*. The Department has taken great strides to make its expertise and services more available to the American people, who are -- after all -- our customers. We must continue those reforms and modernizations.**

**Mr. Chairman, I believe these goals are also the results the American people expect from us.**

**I look forward to working with each of you to keep all the sectors of the economy strong and growing throughout this time.**

**Thank you very much.**